10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

26 September 1991

Dear Mr Salem Azzam,

Thank you for your letter of 10 September. The Prime Minister has asked me to reply.

The Prime Minister is also concerned by the difficulties faced by the civilian population in Iraq. We pay close attention to the situation there. The Government has stated many times that our quarrel is not with the Iraqi people but with Saddam Hussein and his regime. We have therefore supported the work of the United Nations, the International Red Cross and other humanitarian agencies providing help to Iraqi civilians. Since April, we have committed £62 million in humanitarian aid, including $16 million to the United Nations appeal. We are the largest cash donors to the ICRC's appeal.

It is important to remember that Saddam Hussein is responsible for Iraq's difficulties and for the problems of the Iraqi people. His persecution and neglect of some groups of the Iraqi civilian population goes back many years. After the ceasefire, his violent repression in Northern and Southern Iraq made conditions for many Iraqis even worse than before.

The United Nations has eased sanctions to enable Iraq to import food and other supplies for essential civilian use and, if necessary, to obtain the means to pay for them. Medicines have never been subject to the embargo. Since April, the UN Sanctions Committee has been notified of over 1.1 million tonnes of food en route to Iraq. In addition, the Jordanian Government has reported approximately 700,000 tons of food and medicine entering Iraq via Jordan.

UN Security Council Resolution 712 of 19 September allows for food, medical and other essential supplies for the civilian population to be financed from some $1.6 billion of Iraqi oil sales. The United Nations will administer the proceeds of the sale to ensure that funds are used only for purposes authorised

y the Security Council and to ensure that the benefits go fairly to all categories of the Iraqi civilian population. If the Iraqi regime cooperates with the United Nations there should be no delay in this relief going to the Iraqi people.

J S WALL

Mr Salem Azzam

المجلس الاسلامي
Islamic Council

10 September 1991

Mr John Major, MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing St
London SW1

Dear Prime Minister,

I write to appeal to you to consider the plight of the ordinary people of Iraq, innocent men, women and children who are suffering terrible hardship and many of whom are facing death from starvation or disease because they have no drinking water, no medicines, not even basic foods. Children, of whom there are some 200,000 under the age of 4, are sadly the most vulnerable and some reports that I have seen state that 6000 have already died from disease or malutrition. The Save the Children Fund has already drawn attention to this tragedy.

The authorisation on 15 August to Iraq to sell limited oil over the ensuing 6 months will only result in making about $1 billion available for emergency food and medicines. Estimates made by the UN itself say that at least $2.65 billion are needed in the coming 4 months alone just to provide disaster level rations of food, 40% of pre-war levels of drinking water and 50% of electricity. The Secretary General of the UN has recently called for more help for Iraq, as have many aid and humanitarian organisations.

Iraq has now complied with all the conditions set by the UN resolutions passed concerning the Gulf war. It is the common people of Iraq who are suffering, not the government, and the only action that can really help them would be the lifting of sanctions so that the basic necessities of life can begin to reach them again. The UK as a permament member of the Security Council could do much to lead a humanitarian approach to this tragedy and I hope and pray that you will consider taking such action.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Salem Azzam

Salem Azzam
Secretary General

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